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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

The Summer of '72. Vitally needed conservation work, gainful summer employment, and a build-up of a reserve of environmentally aware and knowledgeable young citizens are goals of the Youth Conservation Corps -- the YCC. In June, 1972, the YCC will begin the second year of a three-year pilot program employing young men and women in worthwhile and needed conservation work and giving them environmental instruction related to the program. About 3,000 young people will be employed in 95 camps across the country. About half will work in National Forests administered by USDA's Forest Service; the other half will work on lands administered by the Department of the Interior. Young men and women, ages 15 through 18, from all economic, ethnic, and social backgrounds are eligible for the YCC. Application requirements include an interest in conservation, work permits in States where they are required, and, in general, good physical condition. Youth participating in the YCC program will be paid a fixed sum of approximately \$300 for the 8-week session. Recruiting areas will be designated for each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and American Samoa. For each YCC camp, a public school system or other youth-serving organization will usually be named to recruit and process candidates. For young people interested in YCC, a directory listing projects is available from the Division of Manpower and Youth Conservation Programs, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

QUICK TIPS ON "QUICK TIPS"

Camera-Ready In Two Languages. Two new and handy consumer information flyers are being offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to food retailers, and persons involved in consumer education. The flyers, "Quick Tips on Meat and Poultry Care," and "Quick Tips on Meat and Poultry Labels," come camera-ready for reproduction as handouts for point-of-sale consumer information and other consumer education uses by homemaker groups, Extension aides, home economics instructors, utility companies, consumer groups, and others. The 4x9-inch information pieces can be distributed separately or printed back to back as one flyer. The information is available in either English or Spanish. Camera-ready copy, on coated paper, can be obtained free from: Information Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Ask for: Quick Tips Reproducible 1 or (1-S for the Spanish version).

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TRUE LIFE ADVENTURE

Lucy: A Story of Progress. On the early morning streets of a mid-western city, Lucy drives her "new" secondhand car, a former taxi-cab, to work. Lucy knows the city and its problems well: The poor housing, the unemployment, the crime. She used to be part of the problem. Now, as an Extension Aide in USDA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, she is bettering herself and helping to improve the lives of the families in her community. The story of Lucy, as one of the thousands of aides working in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, is told in a new slide set/filmstrip, "Lucy, A Story of Progress." The 76-frame presentation tells how the aides help families use their resources to improve the quality of their diets and to raise their standard of living. It shows, too, how the lives of the aides themselves improve through the satisfaction and income received in helping others. The slide set can be ordered for \$15.50 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The filmstrip can be ordered for \$8.50 from the Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A 33-1/3 record, containing narration and music, is available from either source for \$3.00 for either automatic or manual projection.

DRIVE TO SERVE

Benefits The Elderly. An estimated 800 Americans reach their 65th birthday each day, joining the approximately 20 million senior citizens in the United States. About 5 million of these older persons live at or below the poverty level. Many of the elderly receive direct food assistance through USDA's Food Distribution Program. But many who are eligible are often unable to pick up donated food in person. For some, transportation to the distribution centers may be a problem; others tire easily and cannot handle heavy or cumbersome food items. To help get needed food to senior citizens, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and the American Red Cross have joined forces with local volunteers in a food delivery service called "Drive to Serve." The program, operating on a pilot basis in five cities, works this way: The local welfare office and food distribution director provide Red Cross workers with names and addresses of senior citizens who need USDA-donated foods delivered. The Red Cross workers schedule deliveries and line up vehicles, drivers, and volunteers to carry the food into the recipients' homes. In some areas, students enrolled in driver education courses deliver the food; in others, private vehicles or vehicles from Red Cross motor pools are used.

THE GROCERY BILL PACKAGE

There's Jack In The Wrapper. Packaging materials take about a nine-cent bite out of every retail dollar spent on farm foods, according to USDA's Economic Research Service. In 1970, out of the total \$101.6 billion consumers paid for farm foods, \$8.8 billion was for packaging materials. Food packaging has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry since the days before frozen foods, before overnight coast-to-coast deliveries, before agriculture was so distant from major consuming areas. Today, almost half of all containers and packaging materials made in the U.S. are for food. Paper is the most popular packaging material because of its versatility and relative low cost. Metal cans account for more than four-fifths of the metal containers. However, use of metal has declined since 1958 reflecting in part higher costs of raw materials such as steel and tin. Glass, third in importance, increased from eight to nine percent between 1958 and 1970 in the packaging bill.

THE HITCHING PESTS

Can Spoil Your Fun and Environment. Winter vacations, becoming more popular each year, are often spent in the tropics or other lands of perpetual summer. Souvenir collecting, a natural activity of any vacation, is especially tempting when the vacationer sees that lovely tropical plant, those exotic fruits, or those cute little items made by the natives from local plant life. But be careful! By bringing home such souvenirs you may innocently bring home a hitchhiking pest that could threaten our environment -- destructive fruit flies, animal diseases like foot-and-mouth or rinderpest, unfriendly plants that displace desirable ones. To avoid these introductions, foreign fruits, vegetables, plants, souvenirs made from plant materials, and meats and other animal products are confiscated at ports of entry by USDA agricultural quarantine inspectors -- unless permits are obtained in advance. Increased passenger arrivals in the agricultural heartland of the U.S. have created additional risks to our agriculture from hitchhiking pests. Last year, approximately 2,500 passenger flights from abroad -- representing $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent of all air passengers from abroad -- landed at 43 interior locations. Although inspectors are always on the alert, passenger cooperation is needed to help protect crops, gardens, forests, and livestock from alien pests and diseases. For information on permits, write Agricultural Quarantine Inspection, Animal and Plant Health Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hyattsville, Maryland 20782.

A SHOT IN THE BARK

Treatment For Trees. A technique for injecting chemicals directly into trees is showing promise in the fight against destructive diseases such as Dutch elm disease and wilt in oak and maple. The new technique combines a method of making benomyl -- a fungicide known to be effective against Dutch elm disease -- more soluble, with a rapid and direct injection system. Before, benomyl was put in the soil near the tree, a method not sufficiently effective. Tools for injecting the tree are relatively simple. They consist of an injection mechanism attached to the tree by a belt. A fluid supply hose transmits the solution through the injection head under pressure of compressed gas. The device can be attached in five minutes; the treatment completed in 15-30 minutes. In field tests, researchers injected a 60-foot tree with benomyl. They found the chemical moved rapidly throughout the tree to the farthest twigs. The injection process, developed by Forest Service scientists, not only has economic and physical advantages, but could largely avoid pollution hazards associated with other methods of chemical applications.

FEBRUARY'S PLENTIFUL FOODS

Watch Your P's and Q's. For the "P's" the Plentiful Foods List for February offers prunes, pitted, juiced and plain; peaches, canned; pears, the winter variety; potatoes and their products; peas, split; peanuts and peanut products. Add to these corn (hominy) grits, canned fruit cocktail, oranges, grapefruit, apples, canned corn, and eggs. The "Q's"? These are the abundant quantities of these foods, indicating probable attractive prices for February food shopping. For blustery March the Plentiful Foods List will include peanuts and peanut products, prunes, prune juice and pitted prunes, potatoes and potato products, canned peaches and canned fruit cocktail, canned cranberry sauce and cranberry juice cocktail, frozen concentrated grape juice and canned grape juice, split peas, and eggs.

HOW FIRM A FOUNDATION

Consider The Soil First. There are thousands of different kinds of soils in the United States. Many have severe limitations for use. Cracked foundations and walls, inoperative septic tank filter fields, wet basements, ruptured highways, and severe erosion and sedimentation are costly results of using land for the wrong purposes. But how can you tell if the soil is suitable for the use you plan? One way is through the use of soil surveys. A National Cooperative Soil Survey is being conducted by USDA's Soil Conservation Service. The Survey, which will eventually cover the entire country, is being done in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies and land grant universities. They describe the various soils in a given area, their uses and limitations. A new USDA slide set, "Consider the Soil First," illustrates many of the problems of land misuse and tells how the use of surveys can help avoid some of the problems. The 73-frame, color slide set is of particular interest to land developers, engineers, farmers, homeowners, educators, zoning officials, and land-use planners. The slide set may be purchased for \$13.50 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. A filmstrip is available for \$7.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. Other USDA slide sets and filmstrips dealing with uses and misuses of land are also available. Singly or combined, they could make informative and effective programs for clubs, civic groups, or schools. Titles of the sets, all available from the above addresses at \$13.00 for the slide sets and \$5.50 for the filmstrips include: Washout (50 frames) Examines urban land erosion and pollution of streams. To Save Our Land (48 frames) Describes the work of the Soil Conservation Service in conservation and wise use of soil and water resources. Know Your Land (50 frames) Shows a practical land classification method for the best land use and treatment.

PLAN YOUR HOUSE PLANTS

Selection Is Important. In growing house plants, good judgement in selecting plants, as well as skill in caring for them, are both basic to success. First decide why you want house plants: For decorative accessories? Or for the pleasure of growing and caring for them? Horticulturists in USDA's Agricultural Research Service say that plants to be used for decorative highlights should be chosen for their appearance in the size that you need for the decorative effect. When they begin to look a bit too skraggly, replace them with new plants. If your interest is in growing and keeping house plants year after year, it's a good idea to decide how much attention you can give them. Before making a final choice, make sure the plant's cultural requirements suit your life style and home environment. A fussy person can kill a plant which grows well when left unattended. A forgetful person can ruin a plant that needs constant attention. A USDA booklet, "Selecting and Growing House Plants," (G-82) can be of help in making your house plant decision. Copies are available for 15 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone (202) DU8-5437.